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*United States Marine Corps  
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Marine Corps University  
2076 South Street  
Marine Corps Combat Development Command  
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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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**Building an Amphibious Capability for New Zealand in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Essential in  
an Uncertain Security Environment**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

**AUTHOR: Major Scott Cordwell, New Zealand Army**

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Mentor and Oral Defense Committee Member: Dr John W. Gordon

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 4/2/13

Oral Defense Committee Member: Dr Matthew J. Flynn

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 4/2/13

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## Executive Summary

**Title:** Building an Amphibious Capability for New Zealand in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Essential in an Uncertain Security Environment

**Author:** Major Scott Cordwell, NZ Army

**Thesis:** The establishment of an Amphibious Task Force will advance New Zealand's defense posture and make the nation a more capable and crucial participant in the life and affairs of the South Pacific. It is imperative that the New Zealand Defense Force be able to meet the Government of New Zealand's intent of establishing an Amphibious Task Force as the core of the defense structure, one that is capable of meeting the government of New Zealand's stated outputs as recommended in the 2010 White Paper.

**Discussion:** The New Zealand Defense Force (NZDF) is currently undergoing an unprecedented period of change. A Defense White Paper called for a review of the New Zealand Defense Force and recommended that the NZDF develop an amphibious capability and commence an integration of the three services around the capability of an ATF. The Ministry of Defense has issued a Capability Plan, which confirms the White Papers requirements and outlines the plan for the NZDF to 2035. It is ambitious in that it calls for an Amphibious Task Force (ATF) to be at the core of the NZDF by 2015 and for the NZDF to achieve a greater degree of integration by 2020. The NZDF has the capability to deploy an ATF and currently conducts limited amphibious operations in the South Pacific, both independently and with allied nations such as Australia, France, and the United States of America. The establishment of an ATF at the core of the NZDF will require a greater level of integration than currently exists. There are shortfalls in command and control infrastructure, doctrine, education, training, and joint culture that the NZDF will need to address in the medium term. On the positive side, the NZDF currently enjoys good relations with Other Government Agencies (OGA), allied countries in the South Pacific, and is capable of operating in a multinational or OGA task force in the region.

**Conclusion:** The NZDF faces a number of challenges; whilst it currently has the ability to deploy an amphibious task group, it may not meet the recommendation of having an ATF at its core by 2015. The NZDF will, however, retain the ability to deploy an amphibious task group to meet the majority of contingencies that may arise in the South Pacific.

## Preface

In September 1999, just three months after graduating from the New Zealand Officer Cadet School, I deployed to East Timor as a platoon commander. Operation INTERFET was an Australian-led multinational operation to establish peace in East Timor in the wake of the Indonesian withdrawal in September 1999.

In the early stage of the operation, the officer commanding tasked me to secure a sea point of entry by helicopter insertion for a subsequent amphibious landing. The operation unfolded in the following manner: a Special Forces Detachment had conducted a detailed reconnaissance of the landing zone and provided an excellent ground brief.

We were aware that opposition militia were active in the air and that there had been several contacts in the days building up to the lodgement. Once the LZ was secure, landing craft were to commence landing. However, the communication to the landing craft failed and there were no contingency plans in place. Ultimately, when the landing craft beached, the mission succeeded more through a combination of good luck and initiative at the tactical level.

In retrospect, the events seem farcical. However, they sparked a desire to ensure that the New Zealand Defence Force not be placed in this position again. As a Maritime nation with a strong commitment to the South Pacific, the New Zealand Defence Force should be capable of conducting amphibious operations within our area of responsibility.

The New Zealand Defence Force is striving to establish a Joint Amphibious Task Force and is tracking well to achieving this. Despite the best of intentions, however, there remains much work to be done. The branches and services of the NZDF are well-trained and professional organisations in their own right and regularly conduct joint operations. The question many are asking is what does the White Paper call for that we are not already doing and is there a need for greater integration?

My experience with amphibious operations, albeit limited, has prompted a desire for the ATF to construct work in the NZDF and is the reason I am writing this paper, to determine whether the concept is feasible and necessary.

I would like to extend my appreciation to a number of people who have provided me with assistance and advice throughout this project.

Miss Andrea Hamlen and Miss Stase Rodebaugh from the Leadership Communication Skills Center for their assistance with grammar and academic writing.

Dr. John Gordon, Professor of National Security Affairs, Marine Corps Command and Staff College, for his mentorship and support throughout the writing of this paper.

My wife Melanie for her understanding and support throughout my time at Command and Staff College.



*‘The NZDF will have a Joint Amphibious Taskforce at the core of its force structure by 2015. This taskforce will draw upon the strengths of all three services to enhance the NZDF’s ability to rapidly deploy its people and capabilities. The taskforce will also enable the NZDF to integrate more effectively with other nations and Government agencies.’<sup>1</sup>*

*New Zealand Government Defence White Paper, 2010*

## **Introduction**

In 2010, the New Zealand Government released the first Defence White paper in over ten years. A White Paper is a governmental review, in this case conducted by the Ministry of Defence on behalf of the New Zealand government. The White Paper balances the government’s strategic outlook, the environment, and the fiscal situation and is a significant document for the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) as it outlines the direction in which the NZDF is to develop and the capabilities it is to retain, maintain, and procure. A recommendation of the White Paper is for the NZDF to establish an Amphibious Task Force (ATF) at its core by 2015, and to integrate the Force by 2020<sup>2</sup>. The NZDF currently has the ability to conduct joint operations and already meets many of the White Paper requirements as part of its current outputs.

As a small, isolated, maritime nation with limited resources and considerable responsibilities, there is a very real possibility that an ATF will try to be all things to all people and as such has the potential to be an overambitious undertaking. The NZDF already has a significant number of commitments and outputs<sup>3</sup>, and it is possible that the aspiration of establishing an ATF by 2015 is unachievable. There are a number of factors that need to be analyzed in order to determine whether the ATF goal is wholly achievable by 2015. Inclusive of the White Paper’s recommendation to establish an ATF is the requirement to better synchronize whole of government operations where the NZDF is involved and to retain and develop interoperability with key allies in the South Pacific. An analysis of the White Paper considering the factors of New Zealand Government and NZDF hierarchy of policy pertinent

to amphibious operations, the strategic situation, current force structure, training regime, and major regional exercises is required to determine whether the NZDF will be able to meet the Government of New Zealand Intent to establish an ATF. Ultimately the establishment of an Amphibious Task Force will advance New Zealand's defense posture and make the nation a more capable and crucial participant in the life and affairs of the South Pacific. It is imperative that the New Zealand Defense Force be able to meet the Government of New Zealand's intent of establishing an Amphibious Task Force as the core of the defense structure, one that is capable of meeting the government of New Zealand's stated outputs as recommended in the 2010 White Paper.

### **Background**

To understand the requirement for the NZDF to establish an ATF it is important to understand the historical context of New Zealand operations in the South Pacific. Since New Zealand started on its steps as an independent country, it has recognised its obligations to be a good neighbour and ally to other states in the region. Arguably, New Zealand's first independent military action in the South Pacific was in August 1914 when the Samoan Expeditionary Force annexed and occupied German Samoa. This operation was also the first New Zealand Amphibious operation in the region. It involved two ships, Monowai and Moeraki (both ships taken up from trade) and, under an escort provided by the Royal Navy, a 1385 strong force landed and secured Apia<sup>4</sup>. From this genesis, New Zealand and the NZDF have continued to conduct military operations in the South Pacific; from disaster relief to search and rescue, to the maintenance of law and order, there has often been a New Zealand involvement.

The NZDF is comprised of three services: the Royal New Zealand Navy (RNZN), the New Zealand Army, and the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF)<sup>5</sup>. The three services

have a long history of conducting successful operations both independently and together. Until recently, a specific service usually led an operation, even if supported by another service, rather than conduct a joint operation. The NZDF established a Joint Force Headquarters in 2001 and subsequently, joint operations have become more common.

The New Zealand Government White Paper of 2010 identifies the strategic situation and the outputs that the NZDF will potentially face in the future. In part, the White Paper recommends that the NZDF should establish an Amphibious Task Force, a recommendation that the NZDF has confirmed as a task. New Zealand does not have a culture of amphibious operations; however, the nation is capable of deploying a joint task-organized force by sea. The NZDF can and regularly structures forces to meet specific requirements. For example, in Exercise Tropic Twilight the NZDF deployed an amphibious taskforce comprised of an engineer detachment and a medical detachment to conduct humanitarian support in Samoa<sup>6</sup>. The ability to employ modular forces such as this is a developing capability within NZDF that the White Paper confirmed as a future output in 2010. This example from a Senior Naval Officer quoted in the New Zealand Navy News demonstrates this:

This is the period when we begin to strengthen and add new capability, and develop our tactics and doctrine for undertaking amphibious military operations. Right now we do elements of amphibious operations, but we haven't yet integrated Navy, Army and Air Force into one amphibious force.<sup>7</sup>

### **The New Zealand Defence White Paper and the NZDF Capability Plan**

In 2010, the New Zealand government issued the first Defence White paper for a decade. The White Paper analyzes New Zealand's strategic situation, policy, and fiscal position and outlines the strategic situation from a New Zealand perspective. The White Paper identifies New Zealand's area of interest and New Zealand's responsibilities in assisting in maintaining the international rule of law. It identifies where the NZDF can contribute to coalition operations or potentially lead operations in support of New Zealand's

policy and objectives. The White Paper recognizes that New Zealand, as a small country with a small population and resource base, needs to maintain interoperability with allied nations and retain a versatile force capable of conducting a wide variety of tasks<sup>8</sup>.

The White Paper addresses the need for the NZDF to maintain interoperability and cooperation with Other Government Agencies (OGA) in order to maintain a Pacific-focused Ready Response Force<sup>9</sup>. It recognizes that New Zealand will conduct and at times lead operations in the South Pacific. The White Paper also recognizes that closer defence relations between New Zealand and Australia will operate together in the South Pacific.

The White Paper identifies that the development of an ATF within the NZDF is a milestone in the long-term strategy plan of the NZDF. It does not mean that the NZDF will maintain a standing ATF. Rather, New Zealand will be capable of deploying an ATF that will be capable of responding to a variety of different situations in the South Pacific. It also means that the NZDF will be capable of deploying individual force elements that will be capable of working with allied amphibious forces. It is important to note that essentially, the NZDF will develop the ability to operate in the joint amphibious coalition environment, enhancing the ability of the individual force elements to operate collectively.

Critically, the White Paper and the Long Term Development plan highlight the ongoing development of amphibious capability and the continued integration of the NZDF. The Key milestones at 2020 and 2035 both contain directives for equipment upgrades and the trained state at which the respective services are to maintain as the below paragraph highlights:

The uncertain strategic outlook underscores the need for an NZDF, which is responsive, versatile, and professional, able to conduct the range of tasks set for it by the Government, particularly in the South Pacific but also alongside partners and friends further afield. The fiscal outlook requires an NZDF which is affordable now and in the future<sup>10</sup>.

Whilst the White Paper states that the NZDF will have an ATF at its core, the reality is the NZDF is aiming to become a more integrated force based around an ATF. Whilst the White Paper and the Defence Capability plan identify the requirement for an ATF, the requisite tasks are more likely to include elements of an ATF and not an ATF in its entirety. The question remains as to how this is different from the current manner in which the NZDF operates.

The White Paper emphasizes the importance of whole of government operations and the NZDF's roles and responsibilities within the wider national policy framework as is shown in Appendix B<sup>11</sup>. As a maritime nation, it is unsurprising that eleven of the tasks within this appendix potentially include the employment of amphibious elements; however, many of the relationships between the NZDF and OGA already exist. Complex memorandums of understanding (MOU) that link different government department outputs to funding define these relationships. The lack of understanding of these MOUs at the operational or tactical level makes synchronisation of defence assets difficult. This Defence Capability plan reflects and reinforces the whole of government approach but does not delineate or assign tasks. Whilst this lack of delineation is acceptable in a strategic document, it leads to an ad hoc application of defence assets at the operational and tactical level. As a small nation, it is critical that the NZDF and OGA cooperate and work together as efficiently as possible to maintain the most efficient expenditure of the countries' resources. The establishment of an ATF can contribute towards this.

The New Zealand Ministry of Defence (MOD) wrote the Defence Capability plan in concert with the NZDF. The capability plan establishes a roadmap for the development of future capability in order to give shape to the first ten years of capability development under the policy framework provided by the White Paper. It confirms the requirement for an NZDF

ATF and provides milestones for equipment and capability development. Critically, it highlights defence shortfalls and associated risk<sup>12</sup>.

### **The Australian Defence White Paper**

New Zealand has no closer friend and no better ally than Australia. A shared lineage and close cooperation in war and peace<sup>13</sup> over one hundred and fifty years has forged the Australia New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) relationship between the two countries. Most disasters or military situations in the Pacific, certainly every one since 1997, have seen a combined ANZAC response. Therefore, it is very likely that future incidents in the South Pacific would involve a joint New Zealand and Australian Task Force. As such, it is relevant to analyze the Australian White Paper and the Australian strategic intent. The Australian Defence White paper of 2009 is similar to the New Zealand White Paper in that it confirms Australia's strategic intent and capability development plan. As far as amphibious operations are concerned, Australia is making a significant investment in capability.

The Australian Canberra class Landing Helicopter Dock (LHD) will enter service in 2014<sup>14</sup>. These ships are capable of deploying an embarked combined-arms battle group. They will be the largest ships ever purchased by Australia and will introduce a significant increase in capability. It is critical, therefore, that the NZDF retain interoperability with the ADF as each country acquires new capability. New Zealand and Australia are developing amphibious capability in concert albeit at a vastly different scale, as one would expect given the difference in the two nations' size. In the future, there is the potential for a substantial ANZAC amphibious capability in the South Pacific. The elements of the respective militaries that would establish an ATF currently exercise within existing service agreements, normally annually and normally within a bilateral framework.

Australia and New Zealand participate in a series of bilateral and multilateral exercises on an annual and bi-annual basis. However, to date there is no standing amphibious exercise between the two countries. The exercise program between New Zealand and Australia is dated, and given the considerable expense both nations are contributing to amphibious capability there is scope to synchronize existing exercise to better incorporate amphibious activities. Better synchronization of exercises would enhance amphibious development and interoperability between the countries, which in turn would enhance the two nations' ability to respond to crisis in the South Pacific. Development towards an ANZAC amphibious ATF could potentially provide support to allied operations in the South Pacific or further afield if the situation required it; this development meets the recommendation of the White Paper and further develops coalition interoperability.

### **FANC**

The French Armed Forces of New Caledonia (FANC) deserve mention, as this organization is presently the third largest permanently stationed military force in the South Pacific. The FANC is a battalion-strength taskforce that maintains the ability to deploy company-sized groups into a permissive environment at short notice within New Zealand's area of interest. France, Australia, and New Zealand (FRANZ) signed an agreement in 1992 to ensure cooperation in relief operations in the South Pacific<sup>15</sup>. The FRANZ agreement has expanded to include evacuation operations if necessary.

The FANC sponsor a series of amphibious exercises that have played an important role in the development of ANZAC amphibious capability. Both the Australian and New Zealand international exercise programs utilize the FANC-sponsored exercises as milestones in their respective amphibious force-generation training cycles. The FANC series includes a command post exercise (Exercise Ceelo) and a live exercise (Exercise Crois du Sud) on a

biennial basis (CPX followed by live exercise). The biennial nature of the exercise program enables New Zealand and Australia to exercise in the South Pacific in a joint, multi-national amphibious environment. The exercises are generally Humanitarian Assistance Disaster Response (HADR) or Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO) centric, which is relevant to the region. In 2012, Exercise Croix du Sud expanded to include Canada, the UK, and the USA for the first time<sup>16</sup>. Whilst the participation from these nations is small, it expands the opportunity for coalition amphibious exercises in the South Pacific. As the only standing multi-national amphibious exercise in the South Pacific, Croix du Sud is pivotal in the development of NZDF amphibious operations in the South Pacific<sup>17</sup>.

### **The Environment**

New Zealand's air and sea gaps provide defence for New Zealand, shape the mindset of its habitants, and shape the nation's requirements for a defence force<sup>18</sup>. New Zealand acknowledges that it has wide responsibilities throughout the world, but, given its remoteness and size, it is not able to conduct independent military operations outside of its immediate area of interest. This concept is central to the White Paper and the decision to concentrate on the development of an ATF that can operate in the South Pacific. It is also critical to the capability of an NZDF ATF.

As an isolated island nation, New Zealand's area of responsibility is considerable and includes responsibilities to its immediate neighbors in the South Pacific, the approaches to New Zealand, New Zealand's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), the EEZs of Niue, Cook Islands and Tokelau, New Zealand's extended continental shelf area, the Southern Ocean, and Antarctica. In addition, New Zealand also has search and rescue responsibility for over 30 million square kilometers<sup>19</sup>. As New Zealand does not have a coast guard to conduct patrolling and policing, this area of responsibility (anti piracy, illegal fishing, search and



rescue) lays with the NZDF. If the NZDF is not the lead agency then it is supporting OGA. The NZDF is not capable of meeting every international contingency. To best prepare itself for the contingencies it may have to meet, the NZDF divides the world into five distinct regions known as Employment Contexts (EC); these are graphically depicted at Appendix C. The NZDF ATF is structured to operate independently in EC 1, 2, and 3. These EC collectively encompass New Zealand, Australia, and the South West Pacific<sup>20</sup>.

Visitors often view the South Pacific as paradise on earth, but often this is not the reality. Resorts conceal a level of poverty in local towns and villages not commonly seen by tourists. There are sporadic outbreaks of localized violence, such as in 2006 when the NZDF and ADF deployed to Tonga, the Solomon Islands, and East Timor in response to localized violence. To date, both countries retain military and police in East Timor and the Solomon Islands. Fiji has had five military coups in the past twenty-seven years<sup>21</sup>. In addition, natural disasters (predominantly cyclones) necessitate whole of government HADR operations on at least an annual basis. A recent example is an 8.0 magnitude earthquake that struck the remote island of Lata, in the Solomon Islands chain on February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013<sup>22</sup>. This disaster prompted a quick localized response from New Zealand to a request for assistance from the Solomon Islands. It is common for New Zealand to provide a rapid response to disasters in the South Pacific region as one of the leading nations in the South Pacific. New Zealand government's policy is to promote a sense of community and maintain stability in the region. An HADR centric ATF is an excellent platform to promote this policy<sup>23</sup>.

The future will see increased pressure on New Zealand's EEZ resources and on the Pacific Islands. Increased competition for natural resources and interest from outside influences (both national and commercially driven) will create friction in the South Pacific. As an example riots in Honiara and Nuku'alofa targeted Chinese business in 2006; New Zealand deployed troops in response to both and, in the case of Tonga, assisted in the

evacuation and repatriation of Chinese nationals<sup>24</sup>. Outside influences often receive the brunt of the frustrations of the indigenous people; as competition for resources increases this will also likely increase<sup>25</sup>. This environment has shaped the capability and requirements that the NZDF currently maintains and confirmed the need for the NZDF to develop an ATF.

## **Tasks**

The White Paper and Defence Capability Plan outline broad tasks for the NZDF. The NZDF is primarily concerned with the security of New Zealand and recognizes that whilst a direct attack on New Zealand is unlikely New Zealand has a responsibility to the rule of international law and order but that the South Pacific is the region that New Zealand should take a greater responsibility in. The White Paper states that New Zealand in conjunction with Australia must be able to react to any likely emergency in the South Pacific. This is the starting point for procuring and developing capability. An NZDF ATF enables New Zealand to be responsive in the South Pacific and maintain a level of interoperability with coalition partners as well as providing an independent response within the South Pacific.

## **The New Zealand Amphibious Task Force**

The Defence White paper states, “The NZDF intends to have the Joint Amphibious Task Force at the core of its force structure by 2015”<sup>26</sup>. The NZDF has conducted operations in the South Pacific since the First World War. These have often been independent service operations that may have relied upon one or another of the services for support. For example, the NZ Army conducted a series of exercises in the South Pacific since the 1970s named the “Tropic” series (Tropic Twilight, Tropic Dawn, and Tropic Astra<sup>27</sup>). These exercises have met individual service requirements but not joint requirements. Often the RNZAF would

conduct an exercise in one part of the South Pacific and the Navy or Army a separate exercise in another part of the South Pacific. From a governmental perspective, this ensures that New Zealand is well represented throughout the Pacific. While it was practicable when the NZDF was not heavily committed to operations in other parts of the world, it is less practicable in today's resource constrained environment.

The establishment of an ATF will meet the outputs designated by the White Paper. New Zealand is a small nation and the term ATF requires framing and defining in that context. The present NZDF definition is:

The ATF will see our current force strengths – our operational and support units from across the three services – able to operate as an integrated force. The ATF will be capable of deploying and sustaining operations in New Zealand or the Southwest Pacific, and will be able to work independently or as part of a larger coalition effort. Individual components will be separately deployable and able to more effectively integrate with other nations' military and civilian organisations.<sup>28</sup>

This means that the NZDF will not be maintaining a permanently established ATF but will establish the ability to generate an ATF to meet specific operations. Many within the NZDF believe that the ability to achieve this already exists and that the establishment of an ATF is at best formalising the status quo or at worst fostering greater interdependence at the cost of service culture. In part, this is true; however, there are a myriad of differences between conducting joint amphibious operations and having an ATF at the core of the organization. For example, there are currently no established TTP's/SOP's for simple procedures such as vehicle loading, command and control relationships are ad hoc and established for each operation, and no command and control system is yet in place to coordinate amphibious operations. Critically, a culture of operating in this paradigm does not yet exist in any of the three services. The Chief of Defence Force best encapsulates this in his 2012 – 2015 Statement of Intent: "It signals a shift in the way we operate and think – from an approach where we generally operated apart and sometimes came together – to one where we

will operate together and sometimes work apart.”<sup>29</sup> This shift in culture is at the core of the establishment of an NZDF ATF. The summary from the RNZAF best encapsulates the requirement and most likely employment of an NZDF ATF:

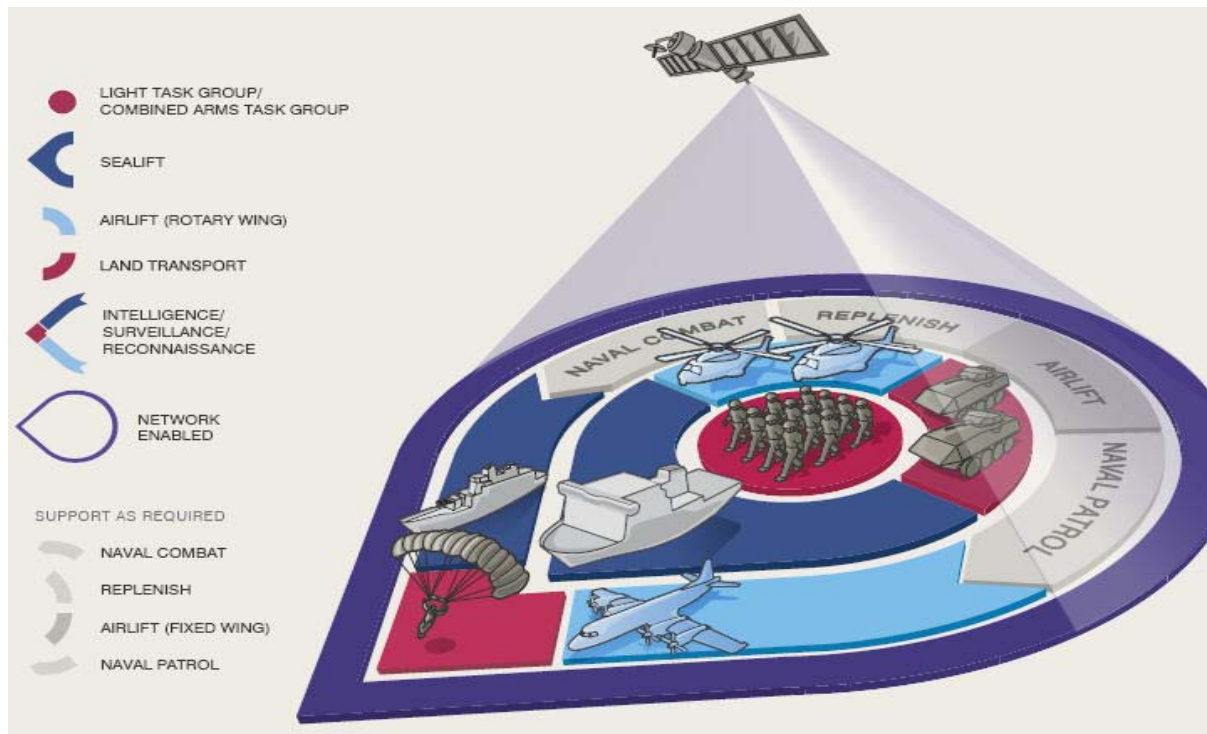
While the ATF will be structured for the deployment of combat forces, the most likely contingencies it will be used for are disaster relief and conducting exercises in our region in support of nation building.<sup>30</sup>

It is important to reiterate that in the NZDF context a standing ATF does not mean a permanently assigned force but rather the ability to task elements of the NZDF for amphibious operations. It will mean a cultural shift to a more integrated approach to training and operations.

### **Composition**

The NZDF intends to develop an ATF that is modular and adaptable. The three services are required to maintain capability bricks that can “plug and play” within an ATF framework. At present the Defence Capability Plan, NZDF Statement of Intent, and the Future 35 strategy confirm this intent but the link from the strategic to the operational lacks detail. The respective services outline broad requirements but there is a lack of synchronisation and detailed guidance to the forces elements at present. The three services are aware of their responsibilities within an ATF and have addressed this in broad terms in their respective statements of intent and annual plans.

The graphic depicts the desired task organization and employment of an NZDF ATF. It depicts a taskforce that includes strategic surveillance, air and maritime lift, combat logistics and command elements. Each of the three services provides critical elements to the ATF.



<sup>31</sup> New Zealand Government, *Defence Capability Plan*, Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Defence, September 2011.

Practically at the service level, the services are responsible for the following:

The NZ Army provides the combat ground component of the ATF. The NZ Army can deploy and sustain three capabilities; a light infantry combined arms task group, a cavalry combined arms task group and an HADR combined arms task group. The land component is the most affordable to maintain and arguably the easiest to train. The NZ Army conducted an internal restructure in order to best meet the ATF output. As a result, the Army trains and operates in a traditional Brigade structure but maintains the ability to deploy “capability bricks” to establish a task group. The three task groups are structured to meet the likely situations that may occur in the South Pacific. The HADR capability is Medical and Engineer centric and is the most likely to be deployed, the light task group is structured for peace support operations, and the cavalry task group is structured for warfighting. The Army currently meets the White Paper criteria although it acknowledges shortfalls in command and

control platforms and combined arms readiness. It is important to note that the NZ Army does not provide a permanently assigned marine detachment to the RNZN.

The NZ Navy provides the means of deploying the ATF. HMNZS Canterbury is the amphibious capability in the NZDF context. Canterbury is not a true amphibious ship but a roll on roll off (RORO) ferry adapted to military use. As such, in the eyes of its critics it has limitations that prevent it from truly providing an amphibious capability. Given that the New Zealand government recognizes the South Pacific as its primary area of responsibility and acknowledges that it does not have the ability to operate in the higher end of the war fighting spectrum, the Canterbury is quite capable of meeting both the government's requirements and the intent of the White Paper in delivering amphibious capability to the NZDF. In essence the Canterbury provides the following:

She provides a sealift capability for the transport and deployment of equipment, vehicles and personnel, and is capable of transferring cargo and personnel ashore in benign conditions (up to sea state 3) when port facilities are not available. CANTERBURY has two 59 tonne Landing Craft Medium (LCM) capable of carrying 50 tonnes at 9 knots with a range of 250 nm<sup>32</sup>.

The remainder of the navy's ships have a key role to play as protection, replenishment and surveillance. Whilst the fleet has yet to exercise in concert in a major amphibious exercise, elements of the fleet have supported Canterbury on joint exercises with the NZ Army and the RNZAF.

The RNZAF provides key enablers to the ATF in the form of surveillance aircraft, P3 Orion, strategic and tactical lift, Boeing 757, and C130, and tactical lift, NH90 helicopters. The majority of RNZAF tasks are in support of the NZ Army, RNZN, and OGA. As such, the RNZAF is comfortable in the joint environment. For example, the maritime surveillance element will regularly fly in support of the Ministry of Fisheries (monitor fishing vessels), NZ customs (smuggling), NZ Police (counter narcotics) as well as on anti submarine warfare

exercises with the RNZN and overland surveillance with the NZ Army. The rotary wing component is able to embark the following to support Army or OGA operations:

Up to four NH90's can be carried onboard the MRV for deployment ashore in support of Army operations and disaster relief activities. The MRV is also capable of operating the SH-2G Sea sprite and the helicopter deck is able to handle a Chinook-size helicopter<sup>33</sup>.

It is important to reiterate that these elements of the NZDF exercise and operate together though seldom in complete concert. Often two of the three services or capabilities will deploy but there are limited opportunities to exercise the force in the manner depicted in the above diagram. Competing requirements for scarce strategic assets limit opportunities for joint training.

In November 2012, the NZDF conducted Exercise Pae Tata. This exercise provided an opportunity for what was arguably the first New Zealand based joint amphibious exercise fitting the proposed model from the above schematic, albeit at a macro level and employing HMAS TOBRUK as opposed to HMZNS CANTERBURY<sup>34</sup>.

From a government and NZDF perspective, the capabilities exist to establish an ATF, and the NZDF has in fact done so on a number of occasions over the past three years. The fundamental difference is that the NZDF has yet to independently deploy or exercise an ATF that mirrors the structure reflected in the above schematic although it has demonstrated the ability to do so. To establish as ATF at the core for the NZDF will require more than an ad hoc exercise program involving elements of the three services. To achieve the ATF at the core by 2015 is optimistic without synchronizing the service exercise program.

### **Command and Control**

The NZDF has yet to develop robust doctrine to support ATF operations and deployment in the New Zealand context. The Joint Force plans and coordinates current

NZDF joint and amphibious operations; however, the headquarters is not deployable and is responsible for all domestic and international deployed elements of the three services.

The White Paper recognized that at times there would be a requirement for New Zealand to deploy a headquarters that could command and control New Zealand-led operations. New Zealand established the Deployable Joint Task Force Head Quarters (DJTFHQ) in January 2012 to meet this requirement. At present it is only staffed by the NZ Army and lacks the necessary infrastructure to operate however, it is intended to develop into a headquarters that is capable of supporting New Zealand-led operations in the South Pacific. The NZDF will continue to employ the current practice of creating an ad hoc command structure on an 'as required' basis until the DJTFHQ is operational. The actual shortfall is that the NZDF lacks a deployable Command and Control system capable of commanding an ATF once it is underway. The establishing of a permanent headquarters that is competent in the amphibious realm and capable of deploying is a crucial step in developing an ATF.

### **Training, Education and Culture**

Training, education and culture are three key enablers to the development of an NZDF ATF. The NZDF has a culture of operating independently, commencing with initial induction training and following an education and training model through the ranks structures of each of the services. At very few points do the services conduct combined courses that teach joint operations. It is important to note that the establishment of an ATF is but one milestone on the NZDF Capability Plan, the next significant milestone being an Integrated Force by 2020. Future 35 states that the NZDF is to align the major exercise program and synchronize exercises and operations<sup>35</sup>.



The shift in culture from a force that is together to one that is apart begins at induction. In 2013 or 2014, the NZDF will commence joint induction training. This is possibly the greatest change in the NZDF individual training model ever. Introducing joint induction training is not without its challenges and there are cultural and practical barriers that may yet either delay or prevent it from occurring.

The NZDF conducts training and education independently within the services. Common induction training aside there is not a culture of joint education and there are no formal courses conducted by the NZDF that teach joint or amphibious operations. Over the past ten years, various officers have attended Amphibious Operations planning courses in countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom but these have been on an ad hoc basis. As a result, a few officers have received introductory training and subsequently may have implemented this on exercise or operations. The NZDF does conduct two joint operations planning courses; the Introduction to Joint Warfare and the Joint Operations Planning Course, which are five and ten days long, respectively. These courses introduce officers from the three services to joint planning. These courses are limited in that they teach a military appreciation process under the premise that no student has received prior exposure to the military planning process. In addition, the course employs a NEO in a semi-permissive environment as the planning medium. As a result, the students are not exposed to joint warfighting at the higher end of the spectrum and therefore do not plan for the employment of fires, attack aviation etc. The NZDF needs to develop professional military education to train officers in amphibious and joint operations. The three services also need to factor education into the service training regimes so that officers receive tiered training that develops them as they progress in their careers. The Australian amphibious operations publication provides a good baseline document to establish an amphibious education for NZDF personnel. However, there are a myriad of other options available for the NZDF to achieve this, ranging from

overseas courses with organizations such as the United States Marine Corps (USMC), the British Royal Marines, or attendance on the Australian Amphibious Operations. Attendance on international amphibious courses by select personnel with the goal of establishing a New Zealand based amphibious course would contribute significantly to the establishment of an amphibious culture within the NZDF.

Fiscal pressure has driven a level of interdependence amongst several military trades in the NZDF (medical, communications, physical training). This can assist in creating a joint culture but as the training is trade specific, it is an example of integration. There is a fundamental difference in aspects of integration and the establishment of an ATF. The ATF is a solution to the strategic environment and an uncertain future. Interdependency is efficiency driven and whilst may assist in developing a joint culture are predominantly fiscally driven with the intent to reduce three service schools to one which in turn will reduce overheads. There is an opportunity to exploit this and create an opportunity to enhance a joint culture within the trades that currently train in the tri-service environment.

### **Interoperability with Partner Nations**

New Zealand will only be able to lead or conduct independent amphibious operations in the South Pacific in certain circumstances. An NZ ATF provides a niche capability that can support coalition partners particularly in the South Pacific. Aside from this capability, New Zealand has a reputation for fairness amongst Pacific Island nations. This reputation is helpful in peace support or HADR operations and means that New Zealand may be called to mediate in local affairs. This, in conjunction with the military capability of an NZDF ATF, adds value to operations with multi-national forces that may operate in the area.

The NZDF ATF will be able to augment an Australian ATF and, given the close relationship between the countries, a New Zealand ATF would easily work in an Australian

Brigade/MEU construct. Historically, New Zealand has provided an additional battalion to an Australian Brigade (East Timor 1999 – 2003) or company to an Australian battalion (South Vietnam 1967 – 1972). The New Zealand ATF will be capable of operating as an independent entity of a larger taskforce in a discrete AO or in direct support of an allied ATF.

### **Interoperability with OGA in support of New Zealand INC**

The majority of contemporary New Zealand operations in the South Pacific are in support of OGA. These operations include maritime search and rescue, operations to prevent illegal fishing, and smuggling. These operations generally involve maritime aircraft and government representatives embarked on Navy ships. Presently, habitual relationships exist between the NZDF and the OGA and operations are successfully coordinated and conducted through the Joint Force Headquarters. This system works well when operations are planned and conducted within the existing framework, however, as the White Paper details in the below paragraph the NZDF and NZ OGA need to improve interoperability.

To enable effective independent and combined operations, the NZDF's network systems need to be interoperable within joint, interagency, and multinational environments.<sup>36</sup>

The New Zealand Aid Program (NZ AID) often relies on the NZDF to assist with development and relief packages within the Pacific Islands, particularly emergency response to natural disasters. This is where the NZDF currently conducts what is the most likely task for an ATF. From a land perspective, the NZ Army conducts an annual engineer and medical exercise to one of the Pacific Islands, which in recent years has grown to coalition size. For example, Exercise Pacific Partnership in 2012 saw the FANC and the United States participating in an exercise that provided medical and engineering expertise/development/assistance to Samoa<sup>37</sup>.

The development of an ATF reflects many of the current tasks that the NZDF conduct in support of OGA. These tasks often only involve one or two elements of a service, predominantly Navy and Air Force. Many critics question how the development of an ATF is any different from the current day-to-day operations of the NZDF. The pragmatic response is that there is little change, however, the relations with OGA are being formalized and greater efficiencies between New Zealand Government departments established. The difference is subtle but there is a defined role for greater integration of the NZDF and NZ OGA to meet New Zealand's goals in the South Pacific.

### **Shortfalls and Risk**

Developing an ATF at the core of the NZDF by 2015 is ambitious and contains a number of challenges.

Predominantly, fiscal constraints in conjunction with competing government and service outputs will be the greatest challenge to the establishment of an NZDF ATF. RNZN and RNZAF platforms are strategic assets and are in constant demand to meet a myriad of government outputs. It is already difficult to plan and conduct joint training at the tactical level, and often there is very little joint work up time prior to a major exercise. For example, HMZS Canterbury doubles as the RNZN training vessel; this coupled with time spent in annual maintenance will detract from the HMZS Canterbury's ability to physically train with the other two services. The NZDF has yet to investigate solutions such as greater academic exposure or simulation-based training to offset this capacity gap. These options exist and with an increase in joint education will assist in mitigating the shortfall of practical training. In addition an option is to establish an annual New Zealand based CPX that develops amphibious doctrine in the NZDF context. This could dovetail into the FANC hosted exercises or potentially a US or Australian exercise.

The greatest risk is that the development and maintenance of an ATF will not be fiscally viable and that New Zealand will not be in a position to replace the equipment that it currently has. Many of the NZDF's platforms are recently upgraded or new; the White Paper and Defence Capability plan have mapped replacement and upgrade plans. As it stands New Zealand's current service capability is capable of meeting the requirements of an ATF.

Organizational change takes time; many within the services understand the need for greater integration however, there is a danger that internal friction will dilute the intent<sup>38</sup> and that the level of integration needed to meet the intent of an ATF at the core of the NZDF will not be met. The changes to education and training are yet to be established, once there is a strong foundation of amphibious operations and separate service operations become the norm then the statement of an ATF at the core of the NZDF will have been met. There is a risk that the NZDF will only achieve the goal of having an ATF at its core in name only by 2015.

### **Conclusion**

New Zealand's goal of developing an ATF by 2015 is achievable; however, this level of achievement must be seen as being within the New Zealand definition and context of an ATF. The White Paper and NZDF Capability plan clearly outline the requirement for an ATF, its tasks and the program to enhance and continue to maintain and upgrade key enablers through to 2035. The detail is yet to be developed by the services and thoroughly implemented at the tactical level. Critically there is a growing awareness that this is the future of the NZDF and it is slowly permeating through the three services. There are a number of educational and training deficiencies that need to be addressed to enhance the development of the ATF in the NZDF. However, these will not prevent New Zealand from deploying an ATF for operations in the South Pacific. There are shortfalls, though, that unless addressed may limit the effectiveness of an ATF. The cultural shift to an interdependent force will take time,

and competing outputs make joint training difficult. These issues require further analysis and development, but doing so will very definitely enhance the transition to a more integrated force and would therefore lead to advancing New Zealand's amphibious capability. The establishment of an NZDF ATF is achievable within the constraints of an NZDF definition as is required by the New Zealand government, and will contribute vitally to New Zealand's defense posture.

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<sup>1</sup> New Zealand Ministry of Defence. *Defence White Paper 2010*. (Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Defence, November 2010), 6.

<sup>2</sup> New Zealand Ministry of Defence. *Defence White Paper 2010*. (Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Defence, November 2010).

<sup>3</sup> New Zealand Defence Force. *New Zealand Defence Force, Annual Report, 2011 - 2012*. Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand Defence Force, June 2012.

<sup>4</sup> New Zealand History, Capture of German Samoa, <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/war/capture-of-samoa>, date of access: 13 Jan 12.

<sup>5</sup> "New Zealand Defence Force", *About Us*, last reviewed 8 January 2013, <http://www.nzdf.mil.nz/about-us/default.htm>

<sup>6</sup> New Zealand Defence Force, "News, Specialist healthcare contingent deploys to Samoa on Exercise Tropic Twilight; 28 July 2012", last reviewed 4 February 2013, <http://www.nzdf.mil.nz/news/media-releases/2012/20120728-shcdtsoett.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> Royal New Zealand Navy, The Joint Amphibious Task Force: The Maritime Dimension, <http://www.navy.mil.nz/your-navy/news/20120110-joint-amphibious-task-force.htm>, date of access 21 Dec 12.

<sup>8</sup> New Zealand Ministry of Defence. *Defence White Paper 2010*. (Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Defence, November 2010).

<sup>9</sup> New Zealand Ministry of Defence. *Defence Assessment, July 2010*. (Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Defence, July 2010), 25.

<sup>10</sup> New Zealand Ministry of Defence. *Defence White Paper 2010*. (Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Defence, November 2010)

<sup>11</sup> New Zealand Ministry of Defence. *Defence White Paper 2010*. (Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Defence, November 2010), 21.

<sup>12</sup> New Zealand Government, *Defence Capability Plan* (Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Defence, September 2011).

<sup>13</sup> New Zealand Ministry of Defence. *Defence White Paper 2010*. (Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Defence, November 2010), 18.

<sup>14</sup> Royal Australian Navy, <http://www.navy.gov.au/fleet/ships-boats-craft/lhd>, date of access 21 Dec 12

<sup>15</sup> New Zealand Government, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. *FRANZ Australia, France and New Zealand Co-operate on Disaster Relief in the South Pacific*. Wellington New Zealand: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2 December 2002. <http://www.mfat.govt.nz/Foreign-Relations/Pacific/0-franz.php>

<sup>16</sup> "Armee De Terre, *Exercice Droix Du Sud 2012*", <http://www.defense.gouv.fr/terre/mediatheque/phototheque/operations-preparations/exercice-croix-du-sud-2012-en-nouvelle-caledonie-phase-2>, date of access 4 March 2013.

<sup>17</sup> New Zealand Defence Force. *New Zealand Defence Force, Annual Report, 2011 - 2012*. Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand Defence Force, June 2012.

<sup>18</sup> New Zealand Ministry of Defence. *Defence Assessment, July 2010*. (Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Defence, July 2010), 7.

<sup>19</sup> New Zealand Ministry of Defence. *Briefing for the Incoming Minister of Defence*. (Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Defence, 2011), p10.

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- <sup>20</sup> New Zealand Defence Force, Employment Contexts, last reviewed 8 January 2013, <http://www.nzdf.mil.nz/what-we-do/employment-contexts.htm>
- <sup>21</sup> “Fiji Profile” *BBC, Asia Pacific*, BBC 26 December 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-14919688>, date of access 6 March 2013.
- <sup>22</sup> Nicole Pryor and Agencies, “6.2 Aftershock in Solomons as Death Toll Rises” *Stuff (NZ World)*, February 7 2013, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/world/south-pacific/8271293/6-2-aftershock-in-Solomons-as-death-toll-rises>
- <sup>23</sup> Rolfe, Jim. *New Zealand and the South Pacific*, Revue Juridique Polynesienne 2001, 157 – 170. [http://www.upf.pf/IMG/pdf/10\\_Rolfe.pdf](http://www.upf.pf/IMG/pdf/10_Rolfe.pdf)
- <sup>24</sup> Qin Jize, “Chinese citizens evacuated in Tonga” *China Daily*, November 23 2006. [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2006-11/23/content\\_740382.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2006-11/23/content_740382.htm)
- <sup>25</sup> New Zealand Defence Force. *New Zealand Defence Force Statement of Intent 2012 – 2015*. (Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand Defence Force, 2012), 6
- <sup>26</sup> New Zealand Government, *Defence Capability Plan* (Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Defence, September 2011), 1.2
- <sup>27</sup> The Tropic series of exercises commenced in the 1970’s. The prefix Tropic determined the region (South Pacific) and the suffix the nature of the exercise (Twilight is engineer based, Astra is Helicopter based etc).
- <sup>28</sup> New Zealand Defence Force. *Future 35 Our Strategy to 2035*. (Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand Defence Force, 2012), 4.
- <sup>29</sup> New Zealand Defence Force. *New Zealand Defence Force Statement of Intent 2012 – 2015*. (Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand Defence Force, 2012), 7
- <sup>30</sup> Air Force, <http://www.airforce.mil.nz/operations/media-releases/media-release.htm@guid=%7B47dee2d8-0bac-40fb-bd7a-f5b51e0ed03e%7D.htm>, date of access 20 Dec 12.
- <sup>31</sup> New Zealand Government, *Defence Capability Plan* (Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Defence, September 2011), 22.
- <sup>32</sup> Royal New Zealand Navy, Canterbury, <http://www.navy.mil.nz/visit-the-fleet/cant/default.htm>, date of access 2 Jan 2012.
- <sup>33</sup> Royal New Zealand Navy, Canterbury, <http://www.navy.mil.nz/visit-the-fleet/cant/default.htm>, date of access 2 Jan 2012.
- <sup>34</sup> The Army News, “Exercise Pae Tata Tests New Zealand Defence Force Developing Amphibious Capability” *The New Zealand Army News*, November 2012.
- <sup>35</sup> New Zealand Defence Force. *Future 35 Our Strategy to 2035*. (Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand Defence Force, 2012), 6.
- <sup>36</sup> New Zealand Government, *Defence Capability Plan* (Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Defence, September 2011), p24.
- <sup>37</sup> New Zealand Defence Force, “News , NZ Hosting 'Pacific Partnership' Preparation 29 August 2012. <http://www.nzdf.mil.nz/news/media-releases/2012/20120830-nzhppp.htm>.
- <sup>38</sup> In this case friction refers to inter-service rivalry, excessive demands by OGA, fiscal constraints etc.

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## Appendix A

### Acronyms

Amphibious Task Force - ATF

Australia New Zealand Army Corps - ANZAC

Australian Defence Force – ADF

New Zealand established the Deployable Joint Task Force Head Quarters - DJTFHQ

Employment Context - EC

Exclusive Economic Zone – EEZ

France, Australia, New Zealand - FRANZ

French Armed Forces of New Caledonia – FANC

Head Quarters Joint Force New Zealand - HQJFNZ

Her Majesty's Australian Ship - HMAS

Her Majesty's New Zealand Ship - HMNZS

Humanitarian Assistance Disaster Response – HADR

Landing Helicopter Dock - LHD

Light Armored Vehicle – LAV

New Zealand Defence Force – NZDF

Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation - NEO

Other Governmental Agencies – OGA

Roll On Roll Off - RORO

Royal New Zealand Navy - RNZN

Royal New Zealand Air Force – RNZAF

United States Marine Corps – USMC

Whole of Government - WoG

## Appendix B

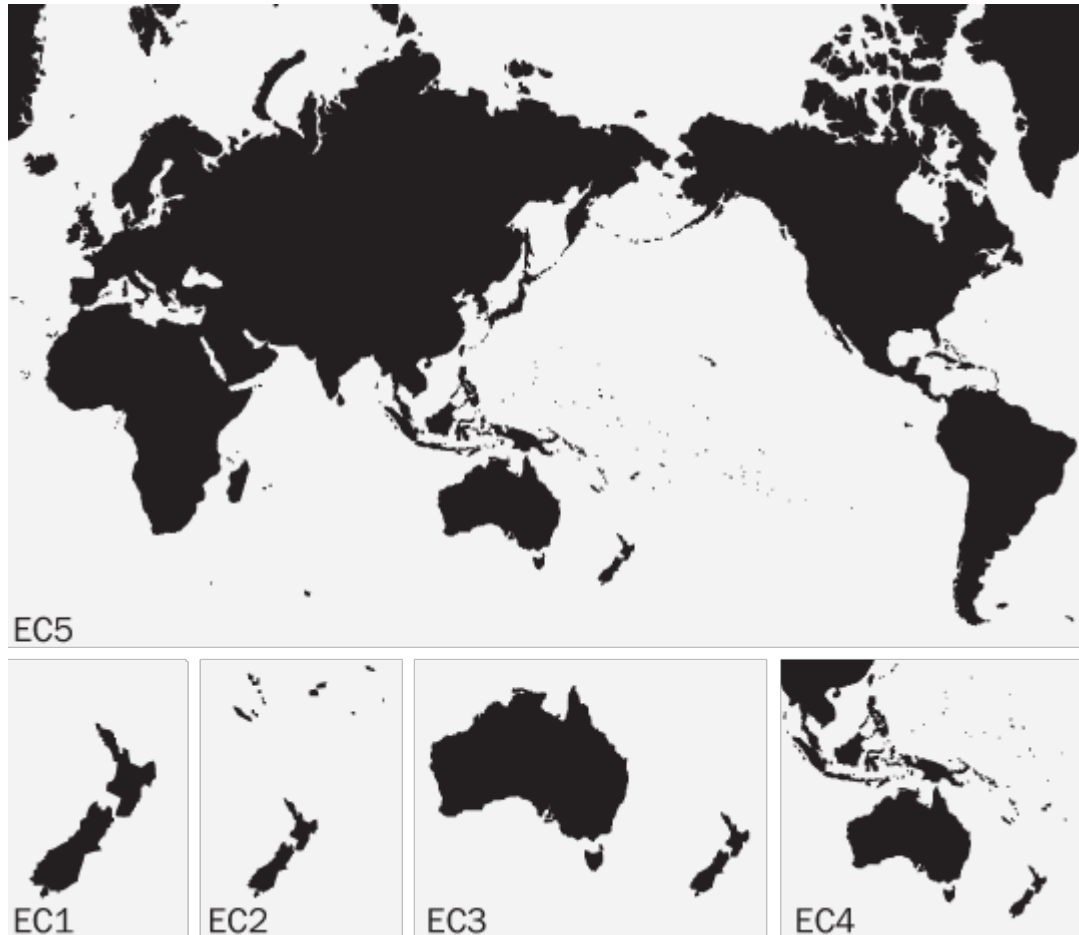
NZDF support to other Government agencies	
Support to police and customs operations	Support to New Zealand's foreign and security policies
Search and rescue	Ceremonial and logistics support to national events (eg ANZAC day)
Rapid support during natural disasters and emergencies	Contribute to New Zealand's intelligence awareness
Support to the Department of Conservation	Maritime surveillance (eg in support of the National Maritime Coordination Centre)
Assistance to the civil power (eg counter-terrorism, prison operations)	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
Support to the Environmental Risk Management Authority	Support to Antarctica New Zealand
Support to the National Rural Fire Authority	Support for youth development
Fisheries surveillance	Support to New Zealand's overseas development programme
Medical rescue and assistance	

New Zealand Ministry of Defence. *Defence White Paper 2010*.

The above table outlines the strategic support that the NZDF is to provide to OGA. Strategic guidance does not determine the extent of the support that the NZDF is to provide and in reality changes frequently as OGA requirements change and the fiscal situation dictates. At a minimum, the NZDF is to be capable of the providing the above support.

## Appendix C

### The NZDF Employment Context's and Area of Responsibility



New Zealand Defense Force, Employment Contexts, last reviewed 8 January 2013.  
<http://www.nzdf.mil.nz/what-we-do/employment-contexts.htm>

This series of maps depict New Zealand's military areas of responsibilities as outlined in the employment contexts that the New Zealand government requires of the NZDF. It is important to note that the EC that the ATF is required to operate in is EC 1, 2, and 3. This may extend to EC 4 and 5 but only as part of a larger coalition effort. The primary area of responsibility for an NZDF ATF is EC2, the South West Pacific.